

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Conax Buffalo Technologies

New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Accelerated New Product Development at Conax Buffalo Technologies

Client Profile:

Conax Buffalo Technologies, LLC is a developer and manufacturer of custom-designed, high performance temperature sensors and pressure/vacuum sealing assemblies. The company has been serving applications in power generation, semiconductor manufacture, petroleum and chemical processing, aerospace, nuclear, steel, pharmaceutical, food processing, and general industry for over 50 years. Conax employs 80 people at its facility in Buffalo, New York.

Situation:

One of Conax's major customers informed the company that they had just tested a competitor's new sensor which had a 70 percent longer life in the customer's highly corrosive manufacturing process. The longer product life offered significantly increased manufacturing throughput and cost savings due to a longer duration between maintenance shutdowns. The customer informed Conax that they had 60 to 90 days to develop an equivalent product or risk losing all of their business. Conax reached out to Insyte Consulting, New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership's (NYMEP's) Western New York Regional Technology Development Center, a NIST MEP network affiliate, to facilitate the effort to develop a new product in a very short time frame.

Solution:

Insyte established a cadence of frequent short meetings to brainstorm, define action items and report on outcomes. The strategy was to build up several product variations using different design concepts which could then be tested at the customer. Conax stretched the technology by incorporating features that differed from commonly accepted practices in the industry. In order to overcome supplier delivery issues, Conax took calculated risks by using less preferred technical alternatives that would verify a concept and keep development on schedule. Samples for several new design variations were sent to the customer in 67 days of the start of the project. The customer reported back that after 28 days of testing that one version of the multiple designs under test met the targeted operating life. Conax's customer is continuing to test additional samples of the successful version. Results have been successful and a doubling of orders is anticipated.

Results:

- * Developed new product in 67 days.
- * Increased orders by 50 percent.

Testimonial:

"The results exceeded my expectations. It shows that our team can meet the demands of a significant technical challenge when innovative management techniques are used."

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Robert Fox, President